

THE SGI JOURNAL OF LEADERSHIP

No
16



July-Aug 2023



ENCOURAGING NEXT-GENERATION LEADERS

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THE SGI JOURNAL OF LEADERSHIP

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Leading the United Pentecostal Church International to think strategically about future growth.

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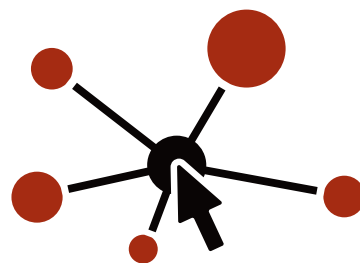
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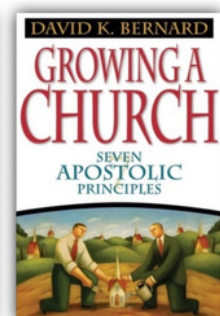
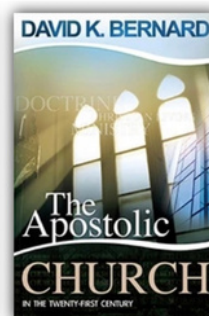
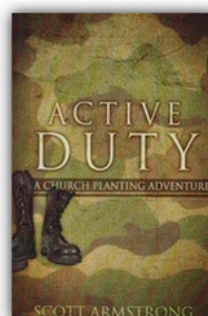
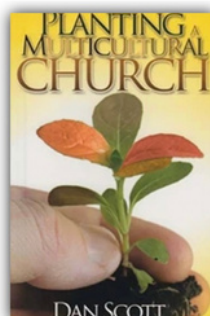
Strategic Growth Initiative (SGI) Resources



The Strategic Growth Initiative (SGI) was born in the heart of General Superintendent David K. Bernard as God gave him a vision for growing the North American church. The General Board of the UPCI approved the forming of SGI for the purpose of highlighting growth in the areas of the number of churches and ministers in North America. The four focus points of SGI are outlined below along with resources available through the Division of Publications.

Multiply the number of churches

SGI will assist districts by providing promotion, planning, and training with the goal of enabling every district to at least double the number of churches (including preaching points, daughter works, autonomous church plants, multicultural church plants, integrate independent Apostolic churches, etc.) in one decade.





The Valley of the Craftsman

Darrell Johns, SGI Committee Chair

First Chronicles is not known to be the most riveting reading. In fact, much of it seems repetitive, recounting the genealogy of the Davidic line. Last year, however, during my annual Bible reading, I read I Chronicles 4:14 afresh. The passage lists the descendants of Kenaz: “And Meonothai begat Ophrah: and Seraiah begat Joab, the father of the valley of Charashim; for they were craftsmen” (I Chron. 4:14 KJV). Something stuck in my spirit.

“Charashim” literally means the “valley of craftsmen.” The valley, located some 30 miles northwest of Jerusalem, was comprised of a cluster of villages that included Lod and Ono. In those days, if you wanted something made right, you would naturally go to the valley where Joab’s family lived. Where else would you find quality furniture? The valley was named for the work that was done there, and Joab was the father of this “valley of craftsmen” (Nehemiah 11:35).

The culture of craftsmanship was strong in Joab’s family and his descendants. Craftsmen played such a critical role in society that when Nebuchadnezzar deported all the important people and essential workers from Judah to Babylon, the craftsmen were among those who were captured and exiled (II Kings 24:14). Even in the days of Nehemiah, that same region continued to be known as the “valley of craftsmen” (Nehemiah 11:35).

Should we, therefore, conclude that all boys born in that valley were naturally gifted in craftsmanship? That is improbable. More likely, young boys grew up watching their dads work. In those days, dads did not kiss their wives goodbye and drive across town to work. Fathers predominantly worked at home or in the local village, near their families. Children grew up learning trades from their fathers. This was their way of life and precisely how boys grew to be men who eventually could support their own families and become successful.

So how did Joab cultivate craftsmanship in his family? Joab undoubtedly trained his sons to be craftsmen. Joab’s sons, in turn, trained their sons to be craftsmen. Not surprisingly, Joab’s grandsons trained their sons to be craftsmen. Uncles and cousins also became employed in the same work—the skill of craftsmanship. Joab’s commitment to training led to a long legacy of excellence.

Rabbi Victor S. Appell wrote about a Jewish father’s responsibilities to his son as outlined in the Talmud. According to the text, a father is obligated to circumcise his son, redeem him if he is the firstborn, teach him Torah, find him a wife, and teach him a trade. These directives were all intended to help a child grow into a successful and independent adult who would be part of the Jewish community, establish a household, and find meaningful work.

What is apparent from I Chronicles 4:14 and related verses is that Joab and his family were intentional about creating a culture that would continue for generations. They did not allow their craft to die when they did.

As apostolic leaders, we need to be equally intentional about securing the future of the faith.

Truth endures to all generations (Psalms 100:5), but it is our responsibility to ensure that truth continues not only with us but also to (and through) those who are following us.

How can we perpetuate the faith? We need to embody what we preach. Authority to lead comes from authenticity. Like Aaron's rod that budded, when we have a fruitful, spiritual ministry, it will have a positive influence on next-generation leaders.

If we live what we profess, we will attract young men and women to serve with us in ministry.

God will call the next generation, but we must cultivate that calling. We need to provide the tools, training, and opportunities to young leaders to help them succeed. Had Joab only allowed his sons to watch and never to build, then Joab would have undermined his own legacy. Joab, however, was wiser than that. He allowed his sons to make some mistakes as they were learning to make their artisanry. He had to trust them with his tools and eventually with his shop.

In the United Pentecostal Church International, there is a path to ministry. It begins in the local church with training and trust. As proteges make progress by proving to be faithful, those young adults need a process that develops them into able ministers of the Word. Ministry Central is the online training platform for ministry. UPCI ministries have training programs. UPCI-endorsed Bible Colleges and UPCI-owned Urshan College and Urshan Graduate School of Theology exist to serve our local churches by training the next generation of leaders. Take advantage of these resources to cultivate a "valley of craftsmen."

Think of your spiritual sphere of influence as a valley like Joab's. It may be a ministry, church, section, district, or institution. Your "valley" is known for what it produces. Joab's valley produced craftsmen for generations. What are you producing in yours?



Darrell Johns serves as pastor of Atlanta West Pentecostal Church, Assistant General Superintendent of the Eastern Zone, UPCI, and chair of the Strategic Growth Initiative Committee of the General Board.



Training and Equipping Leaders

David K. Bernard, General Superintendent

Leaders are responsible for developing those under their care. Workers aren't merely tools to accomplish what we want. We should be more interested in people for who they are than in what they offer the church. We must care about their physical, mental, and spiritual health; their family life; and their growth.

As a church grows, the senior pastor will need to invest more time and energy in leaders and their families. Doing so becomes the most efficient use of the pastor's time. It doesn't mean neglecting everyone else but actually developing a more effective plan to minister to everyone. If senior pastors try to handle every problem, crisis, and counseling need, they won't have time for overall priorities. But if they develop a team to help in these situations, the church can deal with individual needs more effectively.

At first, this plan seems counterintuitive, for pastors often address the most urgent needs, while leaders typically don't need constant attention and care. Yet senior pastors should invest most of their time in mature Christians who can then help with urgent needs. For example, as a pastor, I tried to meet with everyone who requested pastoral counseling. After an initial meeting to discern their situation and offer spiritual guidance, I often referred them to a trained person who could provide specific, ongoing advice with regard to finances, marriage, children, legal issues, domestic violence, history of abuse, and so on.

Over the years, most leaders in our church rose from within the body, as converts or as people who moved to our area and received training from us. When someone from outside immediately becomes a leader, there are several challenges. Typically, they have special expertise, which creates high expectations, yet they don't know the church culture and don't have the influence that comes from building relationships. They need to come much like a missionary with a mindset to learn the new culture and language (means of communication). They come to add value, yet they can't have the attitude of trying to correct or improve the church except as part of the team. Everyone has to adjust to the new team dynamics. This process can easily take a year or more, so everyone must be patient and willing. It's easier to promote from within, as insiders understand the church's culture, vision, and mode of operation. Leaders from outside can fill a vital role and bring fresh insight, but they must be selected deliberately and integrated carefully.

Here are some training methods I used as a pastor.

1. Leadership Classes.

I started leadership development classes when our church was small. I announced classes for everyone who was interested in leadership, regardless of current qualifications or involvement. I offered individual lessons such as time management and how to teach a Bible study, and I also offered them as a series. Eventually, we developed a curriculum that we expected all potential leaders to complete.

2. Leadership Retreat.

After we developed a leadership team, we held an annual leadership retreat. We conducted planning, but the primary purpose was team building, casting of vision, training, and motivation. It featured a guest speaker as well as sessions by our pastoral team. The retreat usually consisted of department heads and their spouses, but some years we invited others such as board members, daughter work pastors, or departmental assistants. Some years we conducted a leadership summit (seminar) on a Saturday for current leaders and for prospective leaders that they personally invited.

3. Leadership Team Meetings.

Meetings occurred about eight times a year. Spouses were also invited. The primary purpose was planning, but we also included training and motivation.

4. Seminars and Workshops.

We encouraged departments to take their workers to such events, especially those sponsored by the UPCI. Usually, we assisted with registration or travel. Sometimes we planned a seminar at our church and opened it to our section or district.

5. Other Resources.

We encouraged departments to recommend or supply suitable resources such as books, DVDs, and websites. Many excellent resources are available from the UPCI at Pentecostal Publishing House, Ministry Central (comprehensive training website for ministers and lay leaders), divisional events and resources, General Conference seminars, as well as classes offered by Bible colleges, Purpose Institute, and other endorsed training programs. Urshan College and Urshan Graduate School of Theology offer online, short-term, and residential classes that can lead to a bachelor's or master's degree.

6. Mentoring and On-the-Job Training.

I urged senior leaders to appoint and train assistants, whether officially or unofficially. These assistants could one day succeed them, or as the church expanded, the assistants could take new positions. Assistants can learn much by shadowing senior leaders and watching them operate, especially if leaders take the time to explain what they are doing and why.

In summary, leaders need to invest quality time in people who have the greatest desire and potential, people who have already demonstrated commitment and ability. We need to communicate our burden and our vision. By investing in others, we will maximize our own effectiveness and efficiency as leaders. We will establish a church that can minister to everyone, and we will facilitate both spiritual and numerical growth. When we develop leaders who have a servant's heart, they will minister according to God's plan and the church will grow as God intends.



DAVID K.
BERNARD

SPIRITUAL
LEADERSHIP
IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

Recommended Resource
Article adapted from *Spiritual Leadership in the Twenty-First Century* by David K. Bernard (Word Aflame Press, 2015).





STAY: Thriving through Chaos and Change

Bryan Parkey, SGI Committee Vice Chair

God placed you and His church in the middle of a chaotic and rapidly changing world with complete trust that you will advance His Kingdom! You are a mighty man or woman of valor, and you can do this.

Quit worrying about whether you have "what" it takes to survive and rejoice because you have "who" it takes to survive and thrive!

Jesus said, "I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me you can do nothing" (John 15:5 KJV). Here are seven ways of staying that will help you during chaos and change.

1 STAY CALM

We are all hard-wired with a fight or flight response which can be very valuable in times of crisis. However, you cannot live in a state of panic and still be productive. Don't panic. Pray! As Paul writes, "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:6-7 NKJV).

Don't beat yourself up for feeling fearful or overwhelmed because that can be an involuntary response. Faith is not the absence of fear but rather a decision to act in the face of fear. Many great men and women of the Bible were encouraged with the words "Be not afraid" because sometimes the answer to your prayer may scare you to death.

One of my life verses is when God tells Joshua, "Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest." (Joshua 1:9 KJV). Don't worry; stay calm. God is with you wherever you are and will bring you through.

2 STAY HEALTHY

You are a prize possession unto the Lord, and he cares about your well-being in every area of your life. Paul wrote, "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly, and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thessalonians 5:23 KJV). Sickness is sometimes unavoidable. Still, we should be as healthy as possible for the Kingdom's sake. Wellness comes from stewardship across the health spectrum.

- Spiritual Health
- Physical Health
- Emotional Health
- Financial Health
- Social Health
- Intellectual Health
- Vocational Health

Parker Palmer said, "Self-care is never a selfish act - it is simply good stewardship of the only gift I have, the gift I was put on earth to offer others. Anytime we can listen to our true self and give it the care it requires, we do it not only for ourselves but for the many others whose lives we touch" (Pete Scazzero, *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality*).

When traveling by airplane, the flight safety announcement always reminds the traveler about the oxygen masks that will appear if the cabin loses pressure, and we are told to be sure to secure our own masks before assisting others.

Don't apologize for taking care of yourself to better care for others.

3 STAY CONNECTED

We need each other! Isolation is a death sentence for a leader. The quiet people of Laish were destroyed in the book of Judges because "...it was far from Zidon, and they had no business with any man" (Judges 18:28 KJV). Don't be a loner! Be intentional about connecting with God and with others! Connect with your friends! Connect with fellow ministers! Connect with the body of Christ, where you will be strengthened!

Someone said, "You are only as good as the people you surround yourself with." The chaos of our world and the rate of change necessitates the help of others. You can't be an expert in every subject. Build networks with others who are professionals in their field.

If you are a younger pastor, connect yourself with an elder. The counsel I have received from my elders has been more valuable than gold.

4 STAY FLEXIBLE

"Blessed are the flexible, for they will not allow themselves to become bent out of shape!" ~ Robert Ludlum

Navigating through the Covid-19 pandemic taught us all how to be flexible. We learned how to fulfill the mission in different ways, although inconvenient and uncomfortable, as we wrestled with the learning curve of online communication. Who doesn't have a funny or embarrassing story of something that happened while we adjusted to our circumstances? Ministry doesn't always turn out as we plan, and that is ok!

In his book *Canoeing the Mountains*, Tod Bolsinger writes about the quest of the Lewis and Clark expedition to find a Northwest water passageway to the Pacific Ocean. They had to adjust their approach when they encountered mountains instead of rivers. You can't canoe over a mountain!

"The same is true for all who are called to lead beyond the boundaries of what is known. We go through a personal transformation of identity and mission intention. We go from being river rats to mountain climbers. We keep on course with the same goal but change absolutely everything required to make it through this uncharted territory. We ditch the canoes, ask for help, find horses, and cross the mountains" (Bolsinger, *Canoeing the Mountains*, p.34).

5 STAY HUMBLE

"God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble" (James 4:6 KJV).

God can do great things with humble people! Don't let your success inflate your head or your failure destroy your heart! Lay your victories and your defeats at the feet of Jesus.

As Kingdom leaders, we are not trying to climb the corporate ladder or seek the recognition of man but rather the approval of our Father in Heaven. Humility, not hubris, is the pathway to face the challenges of our times. We follow the example of our Savior who "made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Philippians 2:7-8 KJV).

6 STAY GROUNDED

"Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper" (Psalm 1:1-3 KJV).

Everything we do and every solution we pursue should be built upon the foundation of God's Word. Doctrine matters! Filter everything you believe, feel, and do through God's Word and the leading of the Holy Ghost. Guard yourself against voices and solutions that attempt to circumvent the scripture.

"There are three aspects of Truth. Orthodoxy - Right doctrine. Orthopathy - Right motivation, right heart. Orthopraxy - Right practice. Any one of these aspects pursued alone will lead to destruction" (Dr. James Little, Jr.).

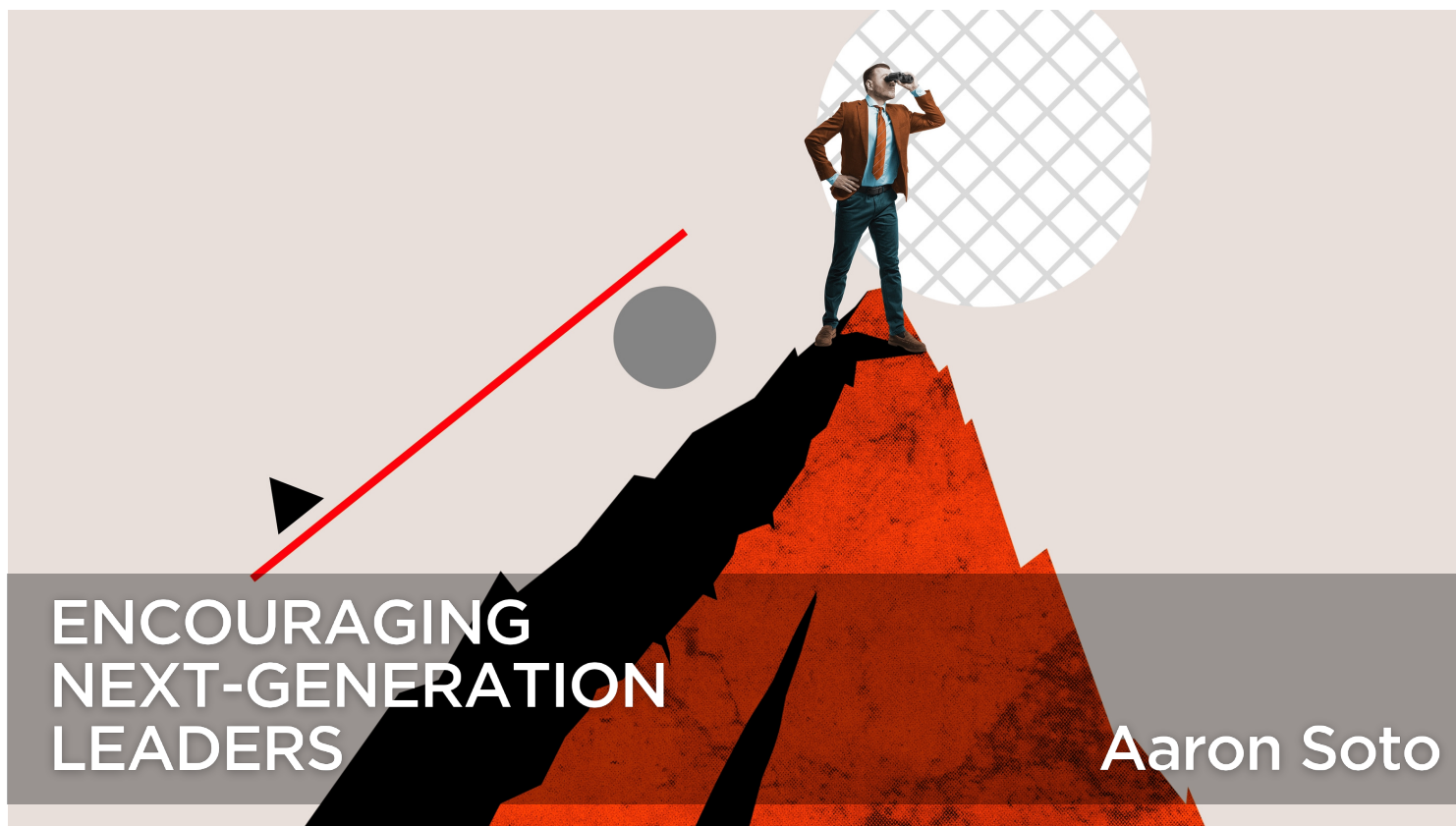
7 STAY PATIENT

Anything worth having takes time to develop. Sometimes, when the culture pushes us to hurry up and go, God just wants us to sit back and wait. Don't be frustrated by the waiting. God knows exactly where you are and has a solution for any dilemma that may challenge your leadership.

"When waiting feels like death, realize you're exactly where God wants you to be. Declare that his goodness, his wisdom, and his timing are right. Admit your distress; be honest with him about your frustrations. Develop a heart of waiting on the Lord, expecting him to open doors when the time is right. And demonstrate a heart of faith as you wade through your time of ambiguity" (Chand, *Bigger Faster Leadership*, p. 35).



Bryan Parkey is the District Superintendent of the Missouri District UPCI and serves as the Vice Chair of the SGI Committee. He and his wife, Lisa, have been married for 25 years and live in Wentzville, MO. Bryan is passionate about seeing a thriving Apostolic work in every community.



IDEA IN BRIEF

- Encouragement happens in the trenches.
- Let love transform generational criticism into generational optimism.
- The currency of encouragement is time.
- Champion encouragement.

Do you remember when you were an aspiring young leader?

I placed my life on God's altar at a youth camp when I was sixteen years old. Prior to that moment, ministry was an abstract idea for me. I began to feel vulnerable when ministry became the nonnegotiable quest of my life. I felt a strong pull to pastoral ministry, but I didn't know what I was doing or how to get there.

Although I had great Christian examples in my life, I was not the recipient of active leadership investment. What I did have were people who regularly encouraged me. My parents and the pastors in our small district created an "updraft" of encouragement in my life. I remember moments when elders would look me in the eye and tell me that God had His hand on my life, followed by a brief word of exhortation.

Cliché? I think not. Their words put wind in my sails. Their interest in me pushed me through self-doubt and failures. Someone saw more than a pimply-faced kid; they saw a calling. Their encouragement confirmed what I felt God was saying about my life.

En-Courage

To encourage is *not* to praise or flatter someone. To encourage is to inspire courage in someone or to spur someone on in a difficult task. The outcome of encouragement is courage. When a Next Generation Leader (NGL) is encouraged, they burn that encouragement as fuel; they renew their resolve to continue the journey.

Timing is Everything

Encouragement is always appreciated in those chance encounters at camp meetings and conferences. Encouragement is needed most when an NGL is standing in the lentil field of their calling, like Shammah of the Old Testament.

**The best encouragement happens
not at the send-off but on the journey,
not at the parade but in the trenches.**

The writer of Hebrews said it best when he said, "Let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works" (Hebrews 10:24, NJKV). We should receive the Apostle Paul's challenge to the Thessalonians to "comfort each other and edify one another" (1 Thessalonians 5:11).

How to Encourage NGLs

Step 1: Love

- Destroy generational distrust through intercessory prayer for NGLs.
- Allow love to transform generational criticism into generational optimism.
- Don't ignore NGL's faults but do view them through the lens of love and mercy.
- Mature your love from a noun to a verb (action).

Step 2: Resolve

- I will do my best to ensure the NGLs in my life are not isolated. (Romans 15:5)
- I will be attentive and intentional when NGLs are present. (Hebrews 10:24)
- I will be sensitive to the Spirit and available for spiritual gifts to operate when interacting with NGLs. (Romans 1:11-12)
- I will be a person who is known for believing in and supporting NGLs. (1 Timothy 4:12)

Step 3: Listen and Learn

- Active listening is possibly the greatest gift you can give an NGL.
- Don't just listen to their words. Listen to their heart.
- Reflect back to the NGL what you are hearing to help your own understanding.
- Get in the "dream-friendly zone." (Your dreams are safe with me.)

Step 4: Invest

- The currency of encouragement is time, so invest your time.
- Give tools, principles, wisdom, and vulnerability (personal mistakes).
- Provide as much accountability as you see opportunity.
- Investing so NGLs do something for you is commodity brokering; investing so you can do something for NGLs is mentoring.

Step 5: Create an "Updraft"

- Strengthen their God Connection (Prayer and Word).
- Teach NGLs how to bring their family with them on the journey.
- Help NGLs repurpose the pain in their life to power.
- Help NGLs focus on the person they are going to be, not just what they are going to do.

My Encouragement Champion

In my early active ministry years, I was blessed to have a special encourager. He never pastored a big church, but he was big in my life. He took the steps we've mentioned. He challenged me to be better and to think bigger. Our conversations gave me the courage not to quit and stay on the Everest of my calling.

Nobody did that for you? Then you should make sure what happened to you doesn't happen to someone else in your sphere of influence.

We believe the church is more critical than human government, the economy, or medicine. The church is in the business of souls. Nothing supersedes the salvation of the human soul. For this reason, no leadership arena is more critical than in the Apostolic church.

NGLs are the most important future leaders and culture shapers on planet Earth.

We would be wise to create an updraft of active encouragement for those who will lead the greatest generation of the church age.

Aaron Soto



Aaron Soto is Senior Pastor of Apostolic Truth Church in Appleton, WI.



Stop Making Good Decisions

Marvin Mitchell

Every decision made in leadership implicates the future. The weight of this truth results in us spending countless hours developing decisions, often at the expense of developing people. As a leader, we are called to develop next-generation leaders. So, with the future at hand, the best stewardship of tomorrow is often guiding another who can successfully face that intersection.

The greatest success in leadership is the win we facilitate through another. As signified by a placard on his desk, President Harry Truman implored leaders not to “pass the buck” of responsibility. But how do we define the scope of leadership responsibility? As caretakers of leadership culture, perhaps we need to reevaluate how often the buck really needs to stop on our desks.

Could we be confusing responsibility with control?

Spirit-led decisions are vital to growing His Kingdom. But is God asking us to make every winning decision? Can the Spirit guide the next leader to wisdom also? Can the Spirit challenge us to guide instead of decide each path that shapes our church culture?

If church culture is how your church lives, does the church have to live like you? How decisions are made and who can make them is a key indicator of healthy leadership culture. This process stifles or stretches our leadership pipeline. The pressure on leaders, especially young leaders, is not to make a leadership mistake. So, we play it safe, keep it close, and accept the status quo. But the vision remains a dream.

“There is only one thing that makes a dream impossible: the fear of failure.” - Paulo Coehlo

Fear of failure can cripple the growth of an organization and limit a leader's vision. This fear can manifest into a hindering habit of protecting a role rather than operating in confidence. If we are trying to keep a position, we rarely will be able to succeed in that role. And typically, how a leader gains their position is how they will attempt to maintain their position. If they were elevated by being safe, they would continue to be safe. If they were elevated as a change agent, they would continue to institute change.

What if we elevated leaders who use their influence to promote the next generation, the next gifting, the next leader, the next vision? What could happen in our churches and organizations if each leader honored who was previous and promoted who is next? No matter how new you are to leadership, you can lean beyond your sphere to support and shape a future leader.

The greatest leadership development tool is trust.

We must stop assuming we have to make all the good decisions. We should develop leaders around us who make good decisions. Is there room around us for others to learn how to lead? Can we remove the threat of a bad decision so that the team protects the practice of “failing forward”? Moving forward is often married to a step into uncharted territory. It is not proven. It is not tried. It is not tested. There is a risk. But if our teams can allow individual leaders to stretch beyond our safety net, the reward of new heights will be realized. The only certain way to never stumble is to stop climbing. Is our leadership culture mature enough to support the learning process that will inevitably attempt steps that are not ours?

It's difficult to lean into the future when the past is waiting on you to trip.

Each leadership culture directly shapes a church's ability to develop the next generation of leaders. Developing leaders is less about a program and more about the day-to-day decision-making paradigm employed by the senior leader. In order to develop as a leader, each man and woman must be given the opportunity to lead. These opportunities must grow faster than the organization demands in order to avoid a leadership bottleneck that will stifle growth and cater to safer plateaus.

The church will grow as the leaders grow.

The church will continue to grow at the rate those leaders choose to trust the next generation to lead. What does our leadership culture look like in our local assemblies? These behaviors, values, and practices reveal our priorities in leadership development.

Below are a few observations to look for when creating a culture that will either hinder or perpetually grow new leaders:

Leader Only Model

This model can be effective for a season if the objective is specific yet relatively small, as the outcome is directly connected to the senior leader's presence.



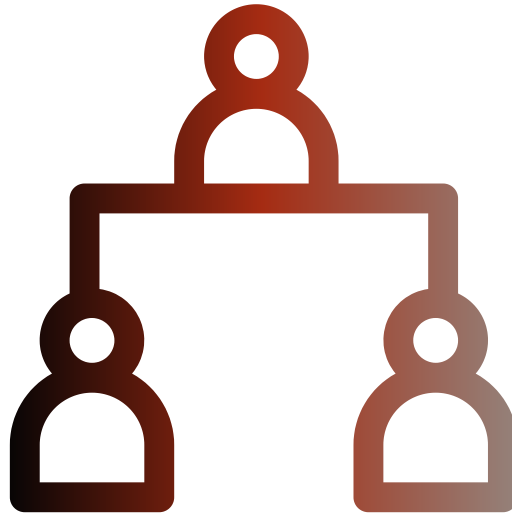
Goal: CONTROL

Example: A skilled contractor designs and builds a facility that will help people in his community.

- Every major decision is made by the senior leader.
- "Doers" relish this method as they do not have to lead to complete a task.
- Leader titles are given, but leader trust is not.
- Giftings of team members are leashed to the giftings of the leader.
- Individuals can succeed and even grow, but the organization is limited as the focus is on the big "I" at the top.
- The capacity of the organization parallels the capacity of the leader.
- The organization hits a relatively low growth ceiling.
- Management is the method.
- The lone leader is overburdened with tasks due to the fear that "someone else won't do it as well as me."
- Burnout of the senior leader is imminent.
- Frustration will creep into those with giftings and leadership potential.
- Apathy will infect the culture as the vision is limited and growth stops.
- Very limited

Leader-Follower

This model is effective if the objective is primarily physical in nature and tangible outcomes can be reported.



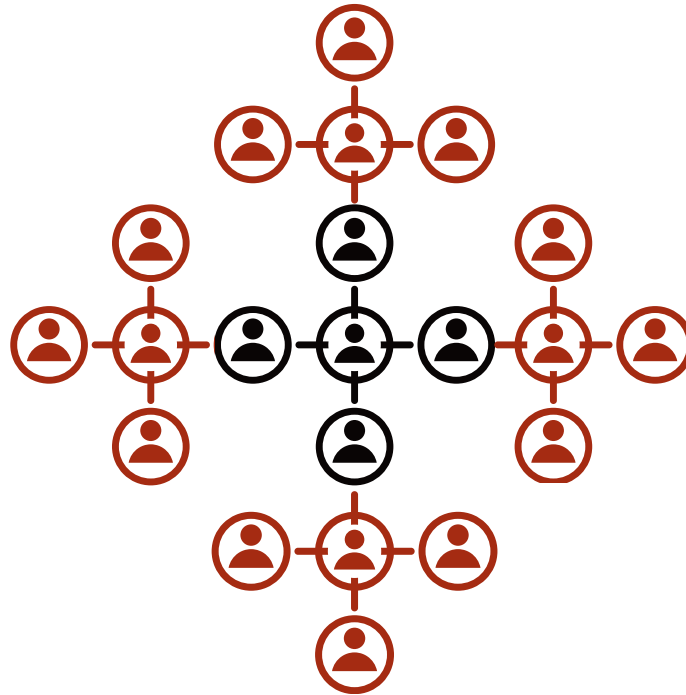
Goal: EMPOWERMENT

Example: An architect guides a team of builders, bankers, and engineers to construct a specific building to help people in their community.

- This model is a progression toward a healthy leadership culture that can achieve what is presently available and presently seen.
- Visionary leaders succeed in implementing this step.
- Titles that are given reinforce the influence already earned.
- This crucial step operates in trust, accountability, and transparency.
- Empowerment works in the context of a unified vision and common objectives.
- The church takes on the personality of the pastor but sometimes struggles to reach differing personalities.
- Empowerment is still top-down.
- Empowerment is “delegation with direction” from the senior leader. The parameters for each decision are still established by one person
- Empowerment alone says, “Each team is worthless without the direction of the senior leader.”
- This is limiting to organizational growth because the source of power always leads back to the senior leader.
- The organization typically hits a medium growth ceiling.
- Very linear

Leader-to-Leader

This model is best if the objective is people-driven and relational outcomes can be shared (mental, emotional, and spiritual growth).



Goal: EMANCIPATION

Example: A visionary challenges a team to design, fund, and build a diversity of buildings in various regions to help people succeed in their climate, culture, and community.

- The decision-making paradigm is diversified across all leadership roles.
- Every leader has succeeded as a follower and remains accountable.
- Legacy leaders succeed in empowering the team and emancipating individual leaders according to that leader's capacity.
- Each layer of leadership empowers itself and is accountable to the overall vision of the church.
- A leader's capacity is not measured by their individual gifts but rather by how they lead others to succeed in their collective gifts.
- Trust has been earned. Each layer of leadership is trusted with the fulfillment of the overall vision.
- Followers have grown into leaders as people desire to serve with them (e.g., their teams are growing, not shrinking).
- Loyalty flows in all directions.
- Leaders value influence over titles and Kingdom over comfort.
- Organizational growth is continuous as long as leaders keep developing leaders.
- All leaders at each level have a shadow they are mentoring.
- Each layer of leadership is producing "fruit."
- Each layer of leadership SERVES the layer beyond (as opposed to below); this is the ultimate model of servant leadership.
- Team members must have the ability to switch between being a leader and a follower, depending on the context.
- Very trusting

If we are to mature into a Leader-to-Leader culture, accountability must mature also. Our accountability to a senior leader grows to also include accountability to the culture. Vision becomes an accountability measure in addition to individual relationships.

In order to allow reasonable risks, the culture supports a “failing forward” pace where failures are not only expected but a critical piece of the weekly growth process of all leaders. In the context of secure leaders, everyone grows through the wins and losses of each team member. Thereby the capacity to grow is stretched to the size of the team, not just the experience of an individual. Setting people up for success is key, but also allowing them room to fail is a primary litmus test of leadership emancipation.

By pushing the bounds of comfortability, we lean into the next goal, the next step, understanding that when we are stretching our capacity, we are more vulnerable individually, but our ability to achieve as a group increases exponentially. The further you lean forward, the faster you will grow, so finding the balance of pace and sustainability is critical. Stretching is healthy, but breaking is bad, so wisdom is necessary. Rejecting the impulse to take control or “save the day” will continually be a challenge.

Emancipation expects others to rise to the challenge as many are liberated to lead in their gifting, calling, and anointing.

In growing the next generation of leaders, could we convey vision instead of giving answers? If we want young leaders to think, could we share our intentions instead of a list of instructions?

Lay down the burden to make each decision and pick up the mantle to grow Spirit-led leaders.

Marvin Mitchell

Marvin Mitchell is a growing disciple, learning leader, happy husband to Anissa, and nerdy dad to Sloan and Valen. He's served as Pastor of The Sanctuary (Columbus, IN), as consultant and leadership trainer within Fortune 500 organizations, and currently is an Evangelist and Vision Facilitator growing churches around North America.



Are Mentors Overrated?

Akil Thompson

In our quest for personal and professional growth, we often seek out mentors to guide us along the way. However, by fixating on finding the "perfect" mentor, we may inadvertently limit our learning potential.

I would like to challenge the traditional notion of mentorship by suggesting that adopting a lifelong learning mindset can transform every experience and interaction into an opportunity for growth.

By embracing humility and approaching life as a perpetual student, we can gain valuable insights from various sources.

So, let's explore why you don't need a mentor and how becoming a student daily can lead to a burgeoning and encouraging personal growth that touches all aspects of your life.

The Bible contains several passages emphasizing the importance of teachability and a receptive attitude toward learning and instruction. Here are two verses that highlight this theme:

- "Let the wise listen and add to their learning, and let the discerning get guidance" (Proverbs 1:5 NIV). This verse encourages individuals to be open to learning and seek wisdom by actively listening and acquiring knowledge. It emphasizes the value of being teachable and receptive to guidance.
- "Instruct the wise, and they will be wiser still; teach the righteous, and they will add to their learning" (Proverbs 9:9 NIV). This verse underscores the idea that even those who are considered wise or righteous can continue to grow and gain knowledge through instruction. It emphasizes the humility and openness required to receive further learning.

The Fallacy of Selective Mentorship

What if selective mentorship is not the key to unlocking your full potential but rather a limiting factor that constrains your growth?

We often determine who can add value to our lives and dismiss those we believe cannot. This selective approach to mentorship can be arrogant and limiting. By assuming that only a select few possess the knowledge or wisdom we seek, we inadvertently close ourselves off from the abundant wisdom that surrounds us. Instead, embracing humility can help us recognize that every experience and individual has something to offer, regardless of their position or status.

Learning Opportunities Everywhere

Discover the extraordinary power of embracing a mindset that sees learning opportunities in the most unexpected places, unlocking a world of continuous growth and discovery. When we shift our perspective and approach life with a student's mindset, we open ourselves to endless learning opportunities. Rather than relying solely on a mentor, we can learn from every interaction, whether it's a conversation with a colleague, a chance encounter with a stranger, or even an unexpected setback. Each experience holds valuable lessons if we approach them with curiosity and a willingness to learn. By recognizing that every moment can be a classroom, we transcend the need for a mentor and allow ourselves to grow continuously.

The Power of Humility

In a society that often equates humility with weakness, it's time to redefine the narrative and acknowledge humility as a powerful force that breeds authenticity, growth, and resilience. Humility is a crucial ingredient in our journey as lifelong learners. It enables us to acknowledge that we don't have all the answers and can learn from anyone, regardless of their background or expertise. When we approach life with humility, we become receptive to the knowledge and insights that come our way. By shedding our preconceived notions and ego-driven desire for a specific mentor, we open ourselves up to profound growth and transformation.

Embracing Lifelong Learning

Contrary to conventional wisdom, the education journey does not end with a degree but rather commences with a lifelong commitment to learning and growth. Becoming a student every day means embracing the idea that learning is a lifelong process. Rather than fixating on a specific mentor, we become curious, seeking knowledge and wisdom in everything He allows to cross our paths. Whether it's through reading books, attending workshops, listening to podcasts, or engaging in conversations, we can gain insights and expand our understanding.

While mentors can undoubtedly offer guidance and support on our journey, it is essential not to confine our growth solely to their influence. By adopting a lifelong learning mindset and approaching life as a student daily, we unlock a world of wisdom and growth potential. Embracing humility and recognizing that everyone and everything has something to teach us expands our horizons and nurtures a deeper understanding. So, let go of the notion that you need a mentor and embrace the abundant opportunities for growth that surround you. When you do, He will grow you right before your very own eyes.

Akil Thompson

Akil has served in pastoral ministry for the past 24 years. After 13 years in corporate banking, he pursued the call of full-time ministry. In 2018, he launched Extraordinary Church in Mississauga, ON (Toronto), alongside his wife Sarah, empowering others for God. Akil's passions include technology, music, reading, and Jesus-centered living. Transforming lives through genuine service.



Encouragement

Paul J. Pamer

Regarding resiliency, there are few stories in history that rival that of the Endurance.

In 1915, Sir Ernest Shackleton led a crew of 27 men to sail to Antarctica to be the first to traverse the frozen continent on foot. However, their expedition would be thwarted before it really began, as their ship Endurance became trapped in ice in the Weddell Sea.

After surrounding the ship, the pressure of the ice crushed the ship, causing it to break up and sink. The crew would be forced to flee by foot, sledge, and small boat for nearly a thousand miles into the teeth of the Antarctic weather. Among the most remarkable insights of the disastrous voyage was the perception of the enemy Shackleton was concerned with most.

Of all their adversaries, the cold, the ice, the sea, and starvation, he feared none more than that of discouragement. Regardless of the gale and daunting mile, the more looming and imminent threat to their survival was giving up. Frankly, their life depended on their ability to persevere. So, to survive, they had to hold tenaciously to hope and endure.

It reminds one of ministry. Every minister will inevitably face storms of setbacks and mountains of problems. However, those obstacles are not nearly our greatest challenge. With less tools and preparation, our predecessors and peers have conquered far more. Like Shackleton's sailors, our greatest foe many times is simply discouragement.

Serving in ministry can be very different from what we imagined. Growth does not come to us as quickly as we hoped; people we invest in walk away, and our great expectations are dashed against the wall of a world not as hungry for God as we thought. It is almost like our ship that triumphantly sailed from the harbor of calling has been crushed in the ice of reality.

Thankfully, we can endure. There are many ways to find encouragement. Here is how.

First, be a friend.

Everyone can give encouragement to someone else. When we make the effort to encourage others with words of faith, something miraculous begins to happen in our own hearts. We reap the fruit of faith sown in others.

Jesus was adamant in Luke's account, "Give and it shall be given unto you." Plant something in others that you wish to reap for yourself. The second installment of the law promised that when the Lord is our Rock, one will put a thousand to flight, and two will dispatch ten thousand. Be a friend and watch what God will do.

Second, get a network.

Fellow ministers who are on the same path as you can both inspire and challenge you to do great things. There is nothing more encouraging than connecting with people who have been where you are and are where you've been. You can both be helped and be a help. Additionally, be a leader who cultivates relationships with people who are succeeding at the level at which you aspire to be. Excellence inspires excellence. Strive to find those people.

Third, never underestimate the power of encouraging yourself.

Faith is fundamentally believing in God with the natural progression of believing in what God can do in you. In I Samuel 30 at Ziklag, David was as low as a person can get. Amalek had raided and burned his camp, and his army's wives and children were kidnapped.

The once mighty men wept to the point where they had no strength left to weep. With no one else left to blame, the men turned on David and thought to kill him. With no army of advisers or choir to sing of his exploits, David encouraged himself in the Lord. He called for an ephod of worship and inquired of the Lord. When there was no human word available, David went to his Lord and found what he needed. Never underestimate the power of getting into the presence of God and seeking Him for support.

A word of caution.

One enemy of encouragement is self-centeredness. The year 2007 did us no favors with the advent of the iPhone as it became quickly available to document and share events. Events about ourselves. Social media brought a heightened sense of importance as it appeared that thousands cared what flavor of ice cream we picked on a random summer day. Sharing experiences and photos seemed innocent enough until the enemy of comparison followed and hindered our joy.

Be careful not to focus on yourself. Back-door bragging in hopes of receiving affirmation is an easy pitfall. We should celebrate victories but listen to our conscience. There is nothing more rewarding than building someone else and nothing more draining than endlessly building yourself.

Jesus required us to repent, humble ourselves, and take up our cross. Proceeding in this vein, Paul pushed the Philippians and us to esteem others better than ourselves. We have been called to be the voice of God in the age of social media and the hunger for positive feedback can become an insatiable desire. One of the most glaring characteristics of a narcissistic personality is the need for affirmation, affirmation, and more affirmation. Don't fall into that trap.

More than anyone, the enemy knows the power and impact of faith; thus, his demonic plan is to combat it through discouragement. If I can do all things through Christ, the enemy's only chance to stop the kingdom is to get me to be discouraged. Similar to Shackleton, we will battle this foe time and time again, but we will prevail.

The gifts and callings of God are without repentance, so they are also without expiration. If God has called you, you are called. Regardless of circumstance. Trust in that calling. Someday soon, you will emerge on the other side, crew intact, continent conquered, and His church strong.

Paul J. Pamer

Paul Pamer is the Senior Pastor of
Apostolic Church in Barbeton, OH.



Encouragement

David Bryan

What must it have been like to be a spiritual leader in the first few months and years of the New Testament church? Thousands of years of understanding, traditions, styles of leadership, and ways of approaching God dramatically changed in a matter of hours and weeks! To these new leaders, the world was brand new. Thrust into a land and dispensation that no one had prepared them for, they had to learn to adapt and persevere and remain teachable, all the while contending with some difficult social and spiritual changes.

There's a lot we can glean when we read of some of their personality conflicts, arguments concerning fixed and changeable traditions, days of worship, frustrations with old ways of approaching God, and fears of the new and unknown ways. One can imagine the great anxiety these new leaders faced. But God was with them, and God empowered them to conquer their times. Their words and examples encourage and empower us to pursue the Kingdom of God for the next generation.

There are some unchangeable fixtures in the economy of God that can help new leaders walk in confidence in their calling in an ever-changing world.

GOD WAS HERE FIRST

Wherever you are, in whatever field of labor God has called you, you are not alone. God was there first, preparing the way. We must recognize and know that nothing escapes or surprises God. He has a plan, and He has laid out the plans along with the power to execute those plans. Your steps have been prepared. You must only learn to trust Him and lean upon Him through the resources He has given you.

Jeremiah 29:11 tells us, "I know the plans I have for you...." He who has called you is faithful, and He has planned on the fact that there will be a successful church and successful leadership in every generation.

We must first establish in our hearts that ministry is not only a God-calling but also God's idea and a means through which He will reach the world in our times. Never lose sight of the fact that God Himself has gone before us to prepare the way, and He guides us along the pathway of life to ensure success.

EVERYONE IS UNIQUE

You are unique, and God has gifted you specifically for what you do. Think of this: God didn't choose Matthew because he was like John. He chose him because he was different than John. God's choice of leaders has always been a picture of His intentions to use diverse gifts and talents. Uniqueness is very valuable in the work of God's Kingdom. Do not get caught up in comparing yourself to others who appear to you to be "more successful" than you feel you are. When we compare ourselves to others, we rob God of the glory that is unique to things that He can only do through us.

Often we have to learn to hear God and work with Him from our own unique gift sets, personality, and location. In our uniqueness, we must recognize that true success has to do with the peace that comes from obeying the voice of God for our life and calling. It will only become frustrating and destructive to model someone else from somewhere else. You are unique! Be you!

NEW LEADERS ARE VISIONARIES

New leadership has been given fresh creativity, fresh excitement, and a fresh vision that sees beyond the moment. As a young leader, your fresh vision will be critical in seeing the way forward. Remember that although fresh vision is critical, it is not alone in Kingdom advancement! When Joel prophesied about God's Spirit-led generation, he said, "Old men would dream dreams, and young would have vision..." Both vantage points are critically important to God's Kingdom.

Your vision is important, but don't get so lost in looking ahead that you cease to learn the immediate. It is said of every Old Testament leader, "their eyes grew dim," meaning that their vision was limited to what was immediate to them. This is called wisdom. God needs next-gen leaders to recognize that although the more seasoned leader's vision becomes more narrowed, it doesn't become less valuable. There are things that can be learned and understood from their perspective. Progressive vision and leadership are necessary to advance God's Kingdom. Always remember, seeing off into the distance is not an arrival. Arrival in greater things is connected to understanding where you are currently and where you have been. A lot can be gleaned and learned from the vantage point of an elder and from understanding who you are as a new leader. Don't get so lost going after the future that you lose where you are and where you've come from.

LESSONS FROM THE PAST

In Malachi 4:5-6, we are told of God sending the spirit of Elijah (awakening, revival, repentance) to a new generation. At that time, God said He would "turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the heart of children to their father." This is a picture of the Spirit bringing two generational components together for the advancement of the Kingdom of God.

New doesn't mean destroying the old. They make new cars every year, but there are some unchangeable fixtures, such as tires, engines, brakes, etc. There are some fixtures in God's Kingdom that have been placed there for good reasons. Young leaders need to seek the wisdom of the past to really understand how to embrace the future. This is where there is great value in two generations joining together to reach toward the greater things that God has prepared for His church. We cannot forget that both the elder and the younger generations are TOGETHER the necessary components of success. When one forgets the other, things get lost.

LEARN YOUR LIMITS

Everyone has them! You are human, vulnerable, and fallible, and you will make mistakes. Some have been very good about making it look like they have no limits and that they can handle all things, but it never ends well. Everyone has limits. Know yours and know them well. Know when to say no. Love your family first and the lost world around you next. Learn the skills necessary to make the best of the call of God on your life.

- Recognize when you are physically tired and get extra rest at all costs.
- Recognize when you are emotionally drained and anxious and get help.
- Recognize when you are mentally fatigued and engage gifts and people who have the ability to help you fulfill the mission.

There is no honor in burning out “for the cause of Christ” when God has placed every resource at our disposal.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

Plan ahead. Plan to fail and plan to succeed. Be realistic with your views of life and success. Have an immediate and an ultimate plan for success. Plan for spiritual success and financial success because one will encourage and empower the other. Plan for good days, and not so good days.

Engage with spiritual and emotional support BEFORE you ever need it. Have an advisor, elder, or counselor on retainer so that you always have someone to help you navigate the stress of life, family, and ministry.

Plan ahead for time away, vacations, and family time. Have open conversations with your leadership team about your schedule and plans for time away each month, quarter, and year. Don't fall into the reactive leadership model. Plan ahead, be strategic not only with ministry development and growth, but with your own ministry and family. Planning ahead can be success long before success is realized.

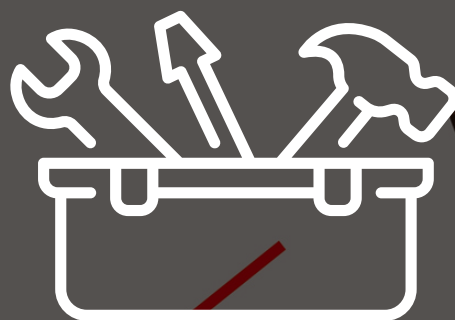
BE COURAGEOUS

You are walking into a world in turmoil. There will be more and more social and moral dilemmas in our time, and there will not necessarily be cases to reference as to how to handle things. As a child of the Most High God, you are always the majority. You will feel the distant heat of the flames of hell, but don't let that intimidate you! Be bold and stand. Your subject matter will not be popular, and your lifestyle may be different and intimidating to those who don't understand. Live it anyway. Love those who need to know the love of God, be patient with those who have yet to know Him. But, above all, be courageous. We need you.

UPCI is blessed to have gifts and ministry that can help strengthen your ministry and your family. Please take advantage of these valuable resources.

David Bryan

David Bryan is the founder and director of Mission37; a ministry designed to partner with spiritual leadership and churches, providing leadership and organization consulting and strategic planning. David serves the kingdom of God in pastoral and evangelist capacities throughout N America and around the world. The Bryan family bases their work and home in Nashville, Tennessee.



ISSUE 16 TOOLBOX PRACTICAL TOOLS YOU CAN USE



The Encouragement Index

Complete the following assessment to determine your encouragement index. Resource provided by <https://www.lancasterleadership.com/team-resources/>.

How frequently do you typically engage in each behavior?

Write the number (1 through 10) from the scale below that best describes your response to each statement on the blank line in front of the statement.

1 = Almost Never
2 = Rarely
3 = Seldom
4 = Once in a While
5 = Sometimes

6 = Fairly Often
7 = Often
8 = Usually
9 = Very Often
10 = Almost Always

1. ____ I set a standard that motivates us to do better in the future than we are doing now.
2. ____ I express high expectations about what people are capable of accomplishing.
3. ____ I pay more attention to the positive things people do than the negative.
4. ____ I personally acknowledge people for their contributions.
5. ____ I tell stories about the notable achievements of the team members.
6. ____ I make sure that our group celebrates accomplishments together.
7. ____ I become personally involved when we recognize the achievements of others.
8. ____ I clearly communicate my personal values and professional standards to the team.
9. ____ I let people know I have confidence in their abilities.
10. ____ I spend a lot of time listening to the needs and interests of other people.
11. ____ I personalize the recognition I give to another person.
12. ____ I find opportunities to let people know the "why" behind our actions.
13. ____ I hold special events to celebrate our successes.
14. ____ I show others, by example, how people should be recognized and rewarded.
15. ____ I give people feedback on how they perform against our agreed-on standards.
16. ____ I express a positive and optimistic outlook, even during tough times.
17. ____ I get to know, at a personal level, the people with whom I work.
18. ____ I find creative ways to make my recognition of others unique and special.
19. ____ I recognize people more in public than private for their exemplary performance.
20. ____ I find ways to make the workplace enjoyable and fun.
21. ____ I personally congratulate people for a job well done.



The Encouragement Index

SCORING THE ENCOURAGEMENT INDEX

- Transfer the ratings for the statements to the blanks provided in the Response Tally below. Notice that the numbers of the statements are arrayed vertically (e.g., from 1 to 7 in the first column, 8 to 14 in column 2, and 15 to 21 in column 3).
- Add the three ratings in each of the seven rows. You will now have a score for each of the seven rows.
- These rows represent the seven essentials of encouragement. The totals for each row tell you which of the seven essentials you are already adept at and which you might work on to develop your encouragement skills.
- Add your scores in the totals column and write the result in the Grand Total space. The lowest possible total you can have is 21, and the highest is 210.
- Once you've finished the scoring, assess yourself according to the explanations of your score on the following page.

THE ENCOURAGEMENT INDEX RESPONSE TALLY

1. _____	+	8. _____	+	15. _____	=	_____ (Set Clear Standards)
2. _____	+	9. _____	+	16. _____	=	_____ (Expect the Best)
3. _____	+	10. _____	+	17. _____	=	_____ (Pay Attention)
4. _____	+	11. _____	+	18. _____	=	_____ (Personalize Recognition)
5. _____	+	12. _____	+	19. _____	=	_____ (Tell the Story)
6. _____	+	13. _____	+	20. _____	=	_____ (Celebrate Together)
7. _____	+	14. _____	+	21. _____	=	_____ (Set the Example)

Grand Total _____



The Encouragement Index

THE ENCOURAGEMENT INDEX SCORE INSIGHTS

From 186 to 210. You're Doing Great!

You're probably seeing a lot of your associates producing at high levels. Morale is high. People like working with you because you keep the work environment upbeat, positive, and inspiring. They feel appreciated and are feeling good about the contributions they are making.

Encouragement appears to be a highly developed part of your leadership repertoire. Your presence alone is an asset. If you're not already doing it, look around for someone who could use your mentoring abilities to be as effective as you are at encouraging others. Also, if people aren't already taking the initiative to recognize and celebrate independently, use your skills to provide structures and tools so they don't have to wait for you to get the ball rolling. Let them know it would be great if they, too, would encourage and celebrate others' achievements.

From 126 to 185. You're Doing Pretty Well

Although most of your associates produce, you may feel they could be giving more. You know there might be some grumbling, but people are generally happy working with you. You may have the haunting feeling from time to time that there is something more you could be doing to motivate and encourage people, but you don't know exactly what it is.

You clearly recognize that encouragement is essential, yet you may feel reluctant to commit entirely to this practice daily. To take the next step, ask yourself what's holding you back from encouraging more. For example, some people limit how much they encourage others because they feel leaders must keep a certain emotional distance from others. As you proceed, you will discover you can keep a certain distance even as you acknowledge individuals and celebrate your team's accomplishments.

Perhaps you're not the cheerleader type, and you're turned off by the idea of making too much of what people are getting paid to do; you feel that they shouldn't be expecting any special treatment. Even if there is some truth in this, the fact remains that most of us respond well when we're acknowledged for our efforts.

Whatever the reason for your holding back, take an honest look at yourself and weigh the reason against what you can gain by encouraging others. You might find that your uneasiness about this process fades away as you experience more tremendous success and ease with this aspect of leadership.



The Encouragement Index

THE ENCOURAGEMENT INDEX SCORE INSIGHTS

From 66 to 125. Time to Get to Work

People are probably not working to their highest levels, and a part of you is well aware of this fact. You might even have the feeling that the only time everyone is working up to capacity is when they think you're watching them.

You may feel there is value in encouragement, but you're missing opportunities to implement the practice. Start paying attention to the achievements of the people around you that you feel are deserving of acknowledgment or celebration: a person going the extra mile to complete a project on time, a team within your organization completing a challenging task, or a person just doing something thoughtful that makes your job easier. Your recognition can be a simple "thank you" to an elaborate celebration.

If you feel reluctant to do any of this, see whether you can identify what's holding you back. Lighten up! Think about things you can do to make your workplace more fun and inspiring for you, too. Even a laugh or two can enhance productivity and worker satisfaction.

From 21 to 65. Time for a Change

Our guess is that your score isn't this low. If your score is genuinely in this range, there's a fair amount of discontent in the ranks, or you're really tough on yourself. The good news is that you are in a position to make immense changes that not only increase productivity but make your job a lot easier.

We know from research that most people produce more in an environment where they receive positive feedback and that productivity diminishes when there is little or no feedback or people only hear from leaders when something is wrong. Because it's your job as a leader to ensure people are earning their keep, you are probably not earning yours unless you encourage people.

Make a commitment today to find something in your workplace to celebrate. Say thank you to someone who enables you to be a little more effective-and tell him or her so! Perhaps you don't appreciate how important encouragement is for maintaining the vitality of your team. Or maybe you're just overlooking opportunities to celebrate and give recognition. See whether there is someone else in your organization you can team up with to help encourage others. Find a couple of role models at church or someone you know from your outside activities; commit to spending time with them to learn what they do in their roles to encourage others.

Authentic leadership has its own intrinsic rewards; they come as you learn to work with others not through intimidation and control but through cooperation and recognition.